

The Stobie Room



Dr Robert Stewart Stobie (1941 – 2002)

This room is named after Bob Stobie, who worked at the ROE from 1974 to 1992. For much of this time, he was in charge of IDPU – the Image and Data Processing Unit. The aim of this work was to cast the information from the UK Schmidt Telescope photographic sky survey plates into digital form, using the COSMOS and latterly SuperCOSMOS measuring machines. The final fruits of this effort can be found in the online catalogues of Edinburgh's Wide-Field Astronomy Unit (WFAU), and the photographic plate library was redeveloped into this new form as a space for scientific interaction in 2008.

Bob was Deputy Director of ROE from 1986 to 1992, when he left to become Director of the South African Astronomical Observatory at Cape Town. Here he initiated the vision of what became the largest telescope in the Southern Hemisphere – the 11m Southern African Large Telescope. SALT was dedicated in 2005, but Bob's untimely death in 2002 prevented him from seeing astronomy flow from the instrument he had done so much to bring about.

Bob was not only a scientist of high accomplishment, but was also a first-rate musician, having led the cello section of the National Youth Orchestra. He will be remembered fondly by all who knew him during his time in Edinburgh, and with gratitude by all who benefit from his scientific legacy.